ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA.

INSCRIPTION FORM.

*To be filled in and addressed to the*_____

1. Province or State.
2. District.
3. Tahsil.
4. Town or village.
5. Exact site.
6. Inscribed object.
7. Language.
8. Character.
9. Condition.
10. Size.
11. Custody.
12. Accessibility.
13. Local information.
14. Special notes.

Date 190 *Name and designation of informant.*

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING IN THE OVERLEAF FORM.

1—4. The names of localities should be given both in the Roman and in the Nagri or Persian character, written as plainly as possible.

5. The site should be described with such accuracy as to enable anybody to find the spot without difficulty.

6. It should be stated whether the inscription is on a building (and if so, its nature and name and the place of the inscription should be added) or on a rock, stone, metal plate or other object.

7—8. If no reliable information is available, these items should be left blank.

9. Here state whether much worn or erased, imperfect, in good condition, faint, etc.

10. Here state the size of the stone, slab or plate on which the inscription is found, and the number and length of the lines of which it consists.

11. If known, state designation of officer, trustee or custodian of shrine, etc.

12. Here simply state "easy" or "difficult." If "difficult," state in the special notes the reason, *i.e.*, whether from natural circumstances of situation or from the attitude of the custodian.

13. Here simply state "See statement attached" or "None." If any statement is attached, state in it any story connected with the inscription, and if it can be read locally, what the reader has to say of its contents.

I.—INSCRIPTIONS ON STONE.

PROCESS A.

1. First clean the stone thoroughly, washing and removing all dust, dirt, grease, moss or other excrescence from its surface. Use no force in this process; make no attempt to render a letter or sign clearer by the use of a chisel or any attempt to "Improve" the writing. Do not ink or blaken the surface of the stone so as to render the letter clearer, as, although this may help you, it injures the stone and makes it difficult for others to use it properly.

2. Take a sheet of printing paper, such as is commonly used for newspapers of the better class and thoroughly soak it in water, for some minutes. For rough inscriptions use ordinary country-made paper.

3. Before placing it on the stone soak the stone itself well with water.

4. Take the sheet of paper by the four corners and place it as evenly as you and your assistant can manage on the surface of the stone. It will adhere of itself as long as it is wet.

5. Take a stiff brush, dabber or handkerchief and commence beating the paper smartly from the centre outwards so as to get rid of all air-bubbles. Go on beating until the paper has taken the exact shape of the stone and followed every hollow and inequality. It will crack and split in many places if the inscription is cut deeply or the inequalities of the surface are great, in which case a second and, if necessary, a third sheet should be laid wet over the first.

6. Do not try and pull the paper off the stone when the beating process is over. When it is dry it will come off of itself. In India, in dry weather, the tendency is for the paper to dry off before the beating process is over.

7. When the beating process is finished you will find that you have made a paper cast or stereotype of the original stone. This will, when dry, be quite hard and capable of resisting considerable pressure. All that is required for packing is to roll it up and to take care that it does not get wet.

8. If the sheets are not large enough to cover the whole stone, which will frequently be the case, repeat the above process over different parts of the stone, taking care that each sheet overlaps its neighbours so that its proper place can afterwards be easily determined.

9. Like every mechanical process the above requires a certain amount of practice before it can be done well. In order to ensure accuracy and to enable the reproducer to correct errors in the sheets selected for reproduction, it is best, if practicable, to take three impressions of every part of the stone.

10. Intelligent native servants can be taught the process without much difficulty.

PROCESS B.

1. This process can be employed at the same time as Process A, and will greatly increase the value of the impression; but it requires special materials and more experience than the above.

2. Take an ordinary printer's ink-roller, pass it, after inking it, with *uniform pressure* over the paper while it is still on the stone and still slightly damp, but not wet. A dabber of cotton wool covered with leather or kid can be specially made for the purpose. The raised parts will thus come out black and every depression or inequality will appear white. Minute accuracy can be obtained by this process.

3. The paper should then be left to dry on the stone as before, and can be rolled up for packing without fear.

The ink to be used can be either Persian ink obtainable from any Bazzar or a mixture of lampblack, gum and water. Care should be taken to use the right quantity: too much ink will blur the impression, too thick ink will rip the paper off the stone, too thin ink will spoil your impression, so will a too great or an uneven pressure of the roller.

II.—INSCRIPTIONS ON METAL.

Inscribed plates of copper should preferably be sent to the office of the local Archæological Officer for reproduction, after which they will be returned immediately. In case the owner of the plate objects to such a course, the following process should be followed:—

1. Open out the letters, where clogged, with needle and knife after washing the plate with soap and water. If this fails, a weak nitric acid solution may be tried and applied very carefully, so as not to injure the plate.

2. When dry go over the plate with printer's ink and a dabber. A very good dabber is made with a big cork, over the end of which is stretched a piece of kid with a little pad of cotton between. Printer's ink can be had from any press. A little ink should be poured on a piece of glass, and spread out and worked over with the dabber until the latter is evenly coated before it is applied to the plate.

3. When this is done get your paper ready. Thick soft paper is best, such as good thick cartridge or drawing paper. Cut the paper a few inches all round larger than the plate. Lay the latter face down upon the paper, after damping the latter, and fold the paper over the back of the plate. This effectually prevents it from moving. If the plate is provided with a ring, a hole should be cut in the paper and a slit made for the ring to pass through.

4. Turn the plate face up, and, with a piece of hard smooth foolscap paper between, commence to rub the back of the paper evenly all over with the top of a glass stopper of a bottle. The paper must be kept damp throughout by laying a folded damp towel over the parts you are not working on. Then remove the paper carefully and let it dry. The prints are reverses, but these are reversed again when photographed for publication.

5. After taking the impression, the plate should be thoroughly cleaned with spirits of turpentine and then brushed with soap-water, so as to remove all traces of printing ink.